

*Rhymes of the Never Was and Always Is*

**far**

**and**

*Drawings by*  
**HENRY B.  
KANE**

**few**

*by*

**DAVID McCORD**

# far and few

by DAVID McCORD

FAR AND FEW fulfills what Louis Untermeyer wrote in his *Modern American Poetry*: "A collection of Mr. McCord's delightful verse for children is still to be published." Few will read very far in this book without learning some of the verses by heart.

By and large, FAR AND FEW is about simple country things, or city things as a country boy sees them. "I think," says Mr. McCord — "or perhaps I simply hope — that the verses in this book reflect a child's self-reliance, his instinctive interest in nature, and the heritage of the young respecting rhythm and the secondary color of familiar words. I intended these rhymes to be *of* children rather than *for* or *about* children. If they are *of*, then they will certainly be *for*. Lear out of loneliness wrote beyond childhood, and Stevenson out of romance wrote delightfully in imitation of it. I have tried to do something quite different. Only children will know if I have succeeded. Childhood loneliness, like laughter, has its own freemasonry —"

FAR AND FEW takes its title from "The Jumbles" by Edward Lear. It contains sixty poems with a great variety of rhythm and ideas, of humor, delight, imagination, and a tinge of sadness in occasional lines. This book echoes again what *The Nation* said eighteen years ago: "Mr. McCord's individuality of imagery, phrase, and syntax is unmistakable."

*Jacket design by Lester Peterson*

*Illustrations by Henry B. Kane*



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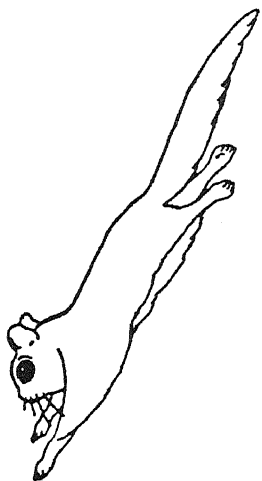


Far and Few





# far and few



Rhymes of the Never Was and Always Is

by David McCord

DRAWINGS BY HENRY B. KANE

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D. T. W. McC.

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For  
E · B · R · McC  
over all the years

*"Not the less revere the Giver,  
Leave the many and hold the few."*

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## *Father and I in the Woods*

*"Son,"  
My father used to say,  
"Don't run."*

*"Walk,"  
My father used to say,  
"Don't talk."*

*"Words,"  
My father used to say,  
"Scare birds."*

*So be:  
It's sky and brook and bird  
And tree.*



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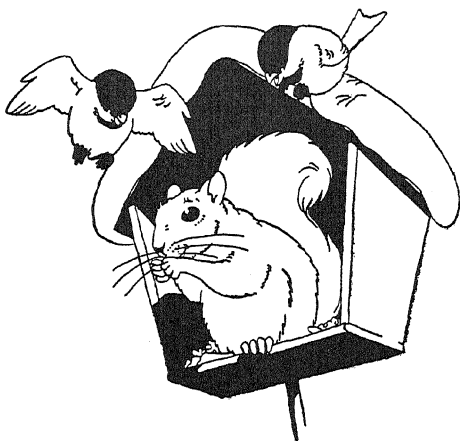


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Far and Few





## Joe

We feed the birds in winter,  
And outside in the snow  
We have a tray of many seeds  
For many birds of many breeds  
And one gray squirrel named Joe.  
    But Joe comes early,  
    Joe comes late,  
    And all the birds  
    Must stand and wait.  
And waiting there for Joe to go  
Is pretty cold work in the snow.

# Five Little Bats



Five little bats flew out of the attic:  
Five little bats all acrobatic.

One little bat flew through the city,  
One little bat was flitting pretty.

One little bat flew round the gable,  
One little bat was not flight able.

One little bat flew in and out of  
Something or other, I haven't a doubt of

*That*, or that five little bats erratic  
Flew back in and are now up attic.



## Five Chants



I

Every time I climb a tree  
Every time I climb a tree  
Every time I climb a tree  
I scrape a leg  
Or skin a knee  
And every time I climb a tree  
I find some ants  
Or dodge a bee  
And get the ants  
All over me



And every time I climb a tree  
Where have you been?  
They say to me  
But don't they know that I am free  
Every time I climb a tree?  
I like it best  
To spot a nest  
That has an egg  
Or maybe three



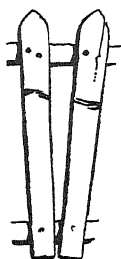
And then I skin  
The other leg  
But every time I climb a tree  
I see a lot of things to see  
Swallows rooftops and TV  
And all the fields and farms there be  
Every time I climb a tree  
Though climbing may be good for ants  
It isn't awfully good for pants  
But still it's pretty good for me  
Every time I climb a tree



## II

Monday morning back to school  
Fool fool fool fool  
Monday morning back we go  
No No No No  
Monday morning summer's gone  
John John John John  
Monday morning what a pain  
Jane Jane Jane Jane





### III

The pickety fence  
The pickety fence  
Give it a lick it's  
The pickety fence  
Give it a lick it's  
A clickety fence  
Give it a lick it's  
A lickety fence  
Give it a lick  
Give it a lick  
Give it a lick  
With a rickety stick  
Pickety  
Pickety  
Pickety  
Pick





#### IV

The cow has a cud  
The turtle has mud  
The rabbit has a hutch  
But I haven't much

The ox has a yoke  
The frog has a croak  
The toad has a wart  
So he's not my sort



The mouse has a hole  
The polecat a pole  
The goose has a hiss  
And it goes like this

The duck has a pond  
The bird has beyond  
The hen has a chick  
But I feel sick



The horse has hay  
The dog has his day  
The bee has a sting  
And a queen not a king

The robin has a worm  
The worm has a squirm  
The squirrel has a nut  
Every wheel has a rut



The pig has a pen  
The bear has a den  
The trout has a pool  
While I have school

The crow has a nest  
The hawk has a quest  
The owl has a mate  
Doggone! I'm late!

V

Thin ice  
Free advice  
Heavy snow  
Out you go  
Nice slush  
Lush lush  
Wet feet  
Fever heat  
Stuffy head  
Stay in bed  
Who's ill?  
Me? A pill?



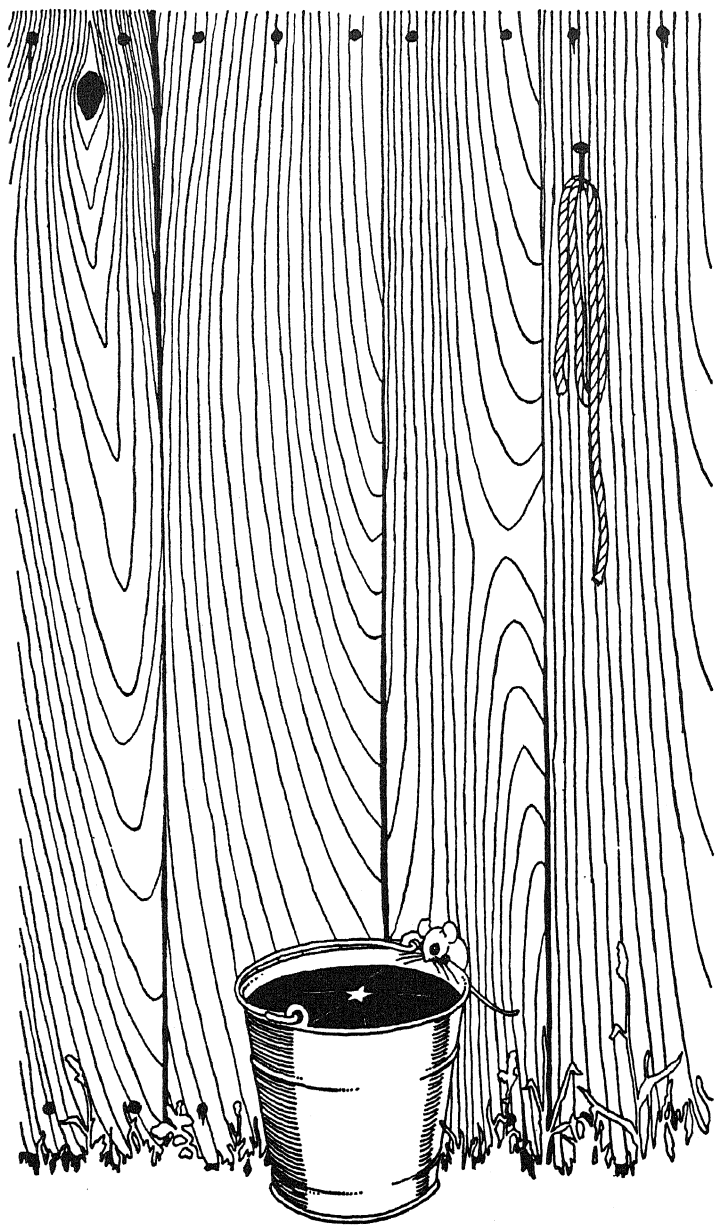
# The Rainbow

The rainbow arches in the sky,  
But in the earth it ends;  
And if you ask the reason why,  
They'll tell you "That depends."

It never comes without the rain,  
Nor goes without the sun;  
And though you try with might and main,  
You'll never catch me one.

Perhaps you'll see it once a year,  
Perhaps you'll say: "No, twice";  
But every time it does appear,  
It's very clean and nice.

If I were God, I'd like to win  
At sun-and-moon croquet:  
I'd drive the rainbow-wickets in  
And ask someone to play.



## The Star in the Pail

I took the pail for water when the sun was high  
And left it in the shadow of the barn nearby.

When evening slipped over like the moth's brown wing,  
I went to fetch the water from the cool wellspring.

The night was clear and warm and wide, and I alone  
Was walking by the light of stars as thickly sown

As wheat across the prairie, or the first fall flakes,  
Or spray upon the lawn — the kind the sprinkler makes.

But every star was far away as far can be,  
With all the starry silence sliding over me.

And every time I stopped I set the pail down slow,  
For when I stooped to pick the handle up to go

Of all the stars in heaven there was one to spare,  
And he silvered in the water and I left him there.

## At the Garden Gate

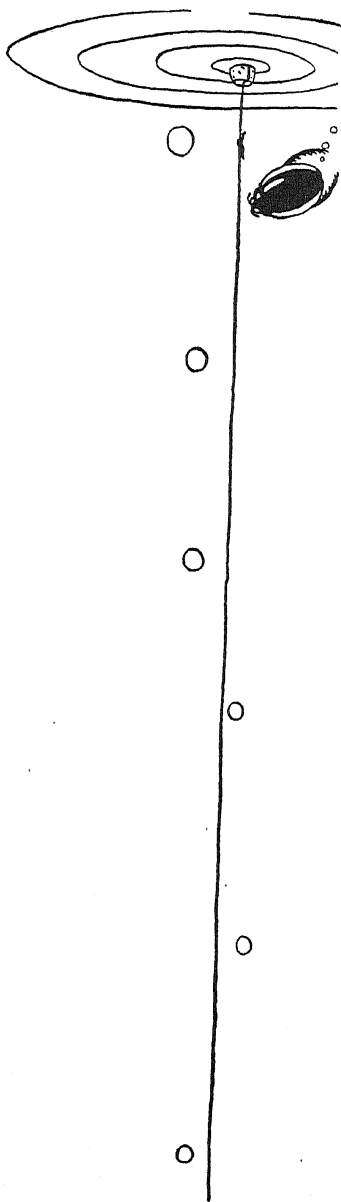
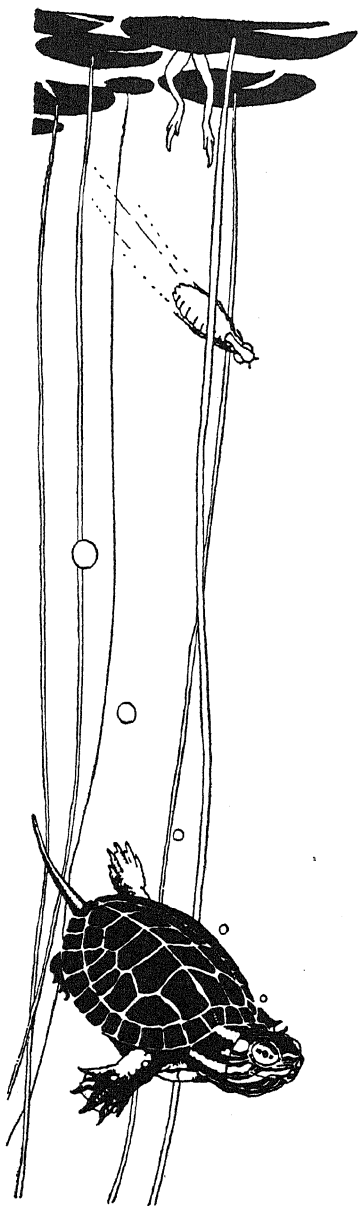
Who so late  
At the garden gate?  
Emily, Kate,  
And John.  
"John,  
Where have you been?  
It's after six;  
Supper is on,  
And you've been gone  
An hour,  
John!"  
"We've been, we've been,  
We've just been over  
The field," said  
John.  
(Emily, Kate,  
And John).

Who so late  
At the garden gate?  
Emily, Kate,  
And John.  
"John,  
*What* have you got?"  
"A whopping toad.  
Isn't he big?  
He's a terrible  
Load.



(We found him  
A little ways  
Up the road,"  
Said Emily,  
Kate,  
And John.)

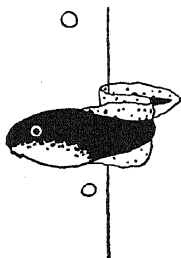
Who so late  
At the garden gate?  
Emily, Kate,  
And John.  
*"John,*  
*Put that thing down!*  
Do you want to get warts?"  
(They all three have 'em  
By last  
Reports.)  
Still, finding toads  
Is the best of  
Sports,  
Say Emily,  
Kate,  
And John.



# The Fisherman

The little boy is fishing  
With a green fishline,  
And he has got me wishing  
That his line were mine.

The little boy is fishing  
With a fresh-cut pole,  
And he has got me wishing  
For his fishing hole.

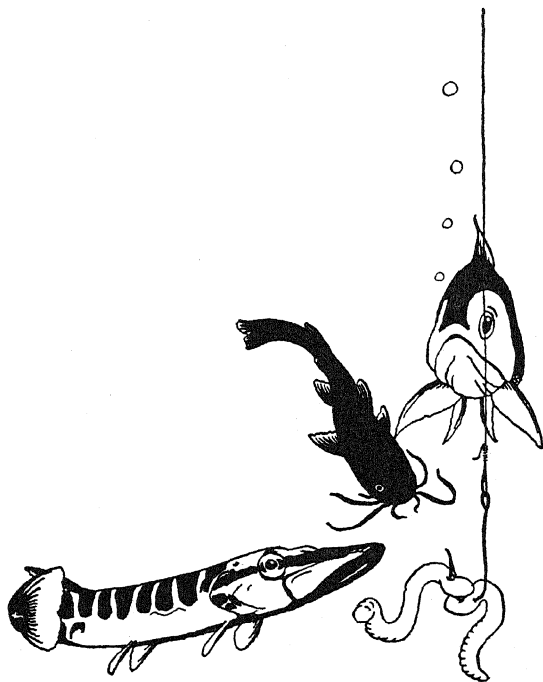


The little boy is fishing  
With better than a pin,  
And he has got me wishing  
That he won't fall in.

The little boy is fishing  
With a disenchanted slug,  
And he has got me wishing  
For the first faint tug.

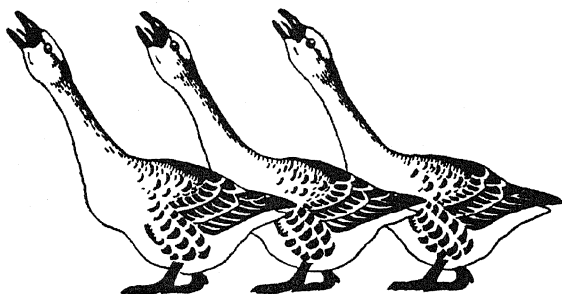
The little boy is fishing  
With a cider-cork float,  
And he has got me wishing  
For the cider and a boat.

The little boy is fishing  
For I don't know what,  
And he has got my wishing  
In an awful knot.



## Something Better

We have a nice clean new green lawn,  
And that's the one I'm playing on.  
But down the street a little piece  
There is a man who has three geese.  
And when you see them, just beyond  
You'll see a nice new deep blue pond.





# The Newt

The little newt  
Is not a brute,  
A fish or fowl,  
A kind of owl:  
He doesn't prowl  
Or run or dig  
Or grow too big.  
He doesn't fly  
Or laugh or cry —  
He doesn't try.

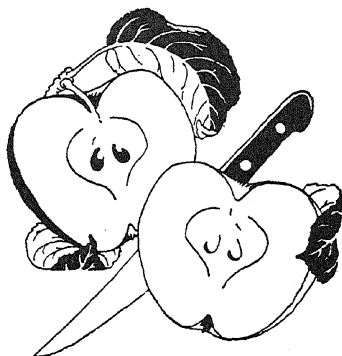
The little newt  
Is mostly mute,  
And grave and wise,  
And has two eyes.  
He lives inside,  
Or likes to hide;  
But after rain  
He's out again  
And rather red,  
I should have said.

The little newt  
Of great repute  
Has legs, a tail,  
A spotted veil.  
He walks alone  
From stone to stone,

From log to log,  
From bog to bog,  
From tree to tree,  
From you to me.

The little newt  
By grass or root  
Is very kind  
But hard to find.  
His hands and feet  
Are always neat:  
They move across  
The mildest moss.  
He's very shy,  
He's never spry —  
Don't ask me why.





## Dividing

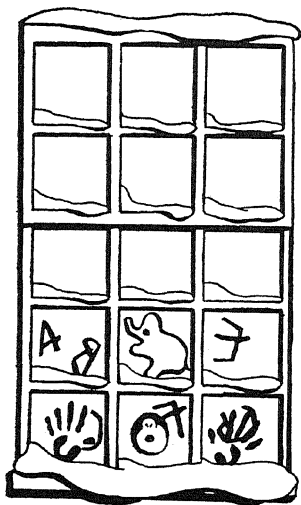
Here is an apple, ripe and red  
On one side; on the other green.  
And I must cut it with a knife  
Across or in between.

And if I cut it in between,  
And give the best (as Mother said)  
To you, then I must keep the green,  
And you will have the red.

But Mother says that green is tough  
Unless it comes in applesauce.  
You *know* what? I've been sick enough:  
I'll cut it straight across.

# The Frost Pane

What's the good of breathing  
On the window  
Pane  
In summer?  
You can't make a frost  
On the window pane  
In summer.  
You can't write a  
Nalphabet,  
You can't draw a  
Nelephant;



You can't make a smudge  
With your nose  
In summer.

Lots of good, breathing  
On the window  
Pane  
In winter.

You can make a frost  
On the window pane  
In winter.  
A white frost, a light frost,  
A thick frost, a quick frost,  
A write-me-out-a-picture-frost  
Across the pane  
In winter.

# The Grasshopper

Down  
a  
deep  
well  
a  
grasshopper  
fell.



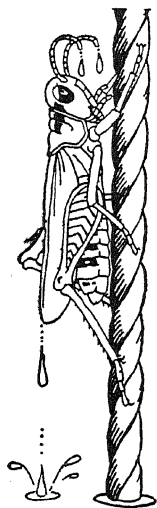
By kicking about  
He thought to get out.  
    He might have known better,  
    For that got him wetter.  
To kick round and round  
Is the way to get drowned,  
    And drowning is what  
    I should tell you he got.

But  
the  
well  
had  
a  
rope  
that  
dangled  
some  
hope.



And sure as molasses  
On one of his passes  
He found the rope handy  
And up he went, *and he*

it  
up  
and  
it  
up  
and  
it  
up  
and  
it  
up  
went



And hopped away proper  
As any grasshopper.

## The Hunter

The tiny young hunter arose with the morn.  
He took up his gun and his powder horn,  
And hied him away for the fields of the sun  
With his wee powder horn and his minikin gun.

The tiny young hunter looked into the wood  
That frowned on the fields of the sun where he stood;  
He shot him a fox and a rabbit and one  
Silinikin bear with his minikin gun.

Far, far from his wood by the fields of the sun,  
With his wee powder horn and his minikin gun,  
The tiny young hunter returned to his bed  
And dreamed he went hunting again (so he said).





## Tiger Lily

The tiger lily is a panther,  
Orange to black spot:  
Her tongue is the velvet pretty anther,  
And she's in the vacant lot.

The cool day lilies grow beside her,  
But they are done now and dead,  
And between them a little silver spider  
Hangs from a thread.

## The Firetender

Each morning when the dawn returns,  
And hills and trees and fields and ferns  
Are grateful in the gaining light,  
He rises from the dead of night  
And rakes the star-coals up the sky  
Until the flames burn bright and high,  
And every cloud that eastward is  
Is reddened by that fire of his.

At evening when the day is done,  
And comes an end of play and fun,  
The old Firetender lifts his rake —  
He gives the sky a mighty shake,  
And down the west the star-coals roll,  
To scatter in the western bowl.  
He watches the reflection spread,  
Then banks the fire and goes to bed.

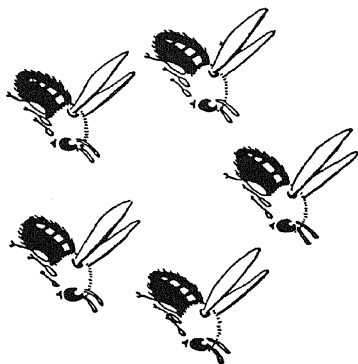
# Notice

I have a dog,  
I had a cat.  
I've got a frog  
Inside my hat.



## Rhyme

The bee thrives  
on honey and hives,  
the cat apparently  
has nine lives,  
Bluebeard was difficult  
for wives,  
and some day I shall count  
by fives.



## The Door

Why is there more  
behind a door  
than there is  
before:  
Kings,  
things  
in store:  
faces,  
places  
to explore:  
The marvelous shore,  
the rolling floor,  
the green man  
by the sycamore?



## This Is My Rock

This is my rock,  
And here I run  
To steal the secret of the sun;

This is my rock,  
And here come I  
Before the night has swept the sky;

This is my rock,  
This is the place  
I meet the evening face to face.

# Tiggady Rue

Curious, curious Tiggady Rue  
Looks and looks in the heart of you;  
She finds you good,  
She finds you bad,  
Generous, mean,  
Grumpy, glad —  
Tiggady Rue.

Curious, curious Tiggady Rue  
Tells your thoughts and tells you *you*;  
Elephant thoughts,  
And spry and lean,  
And thoughts made like a jumping bean,  
Or wedgy ones  
Slid in between —  
She knows them, too,  
If she looks at you,  
Tiggady Rue.

Curious, curious Tiggady Rue  
Knows your thoughts and you and you.  
When dusk is down  
On field and town,  
Beware!  
Take care!  
If she looks at you —  
Tiggady Rue.



# All About Fireflies All About

The stars are all so far away  
For creature-kind that hide by day  
(For moth and mouse and toad and such)  
The starlight doesn't count for much.  
And that is why a field at night  
In May or June is plaintive, bright  
With little lanterns sailing by,  
Like stars across a mimic sky,  
Just high enough — but not too high.

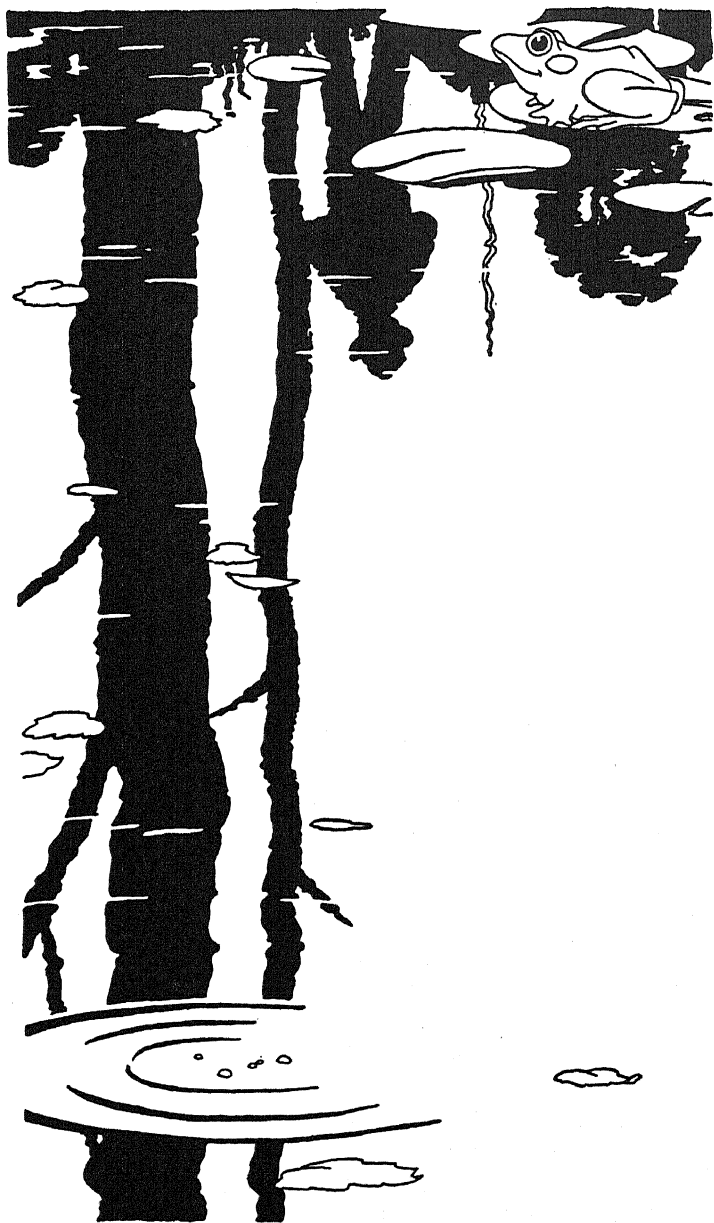




## Compass Song

North, south, east, and west,  
Summer, spring, winter, fall:  
Each of you I love the best,  
All of you — *all*.

Summernorth, wintersouth,  
Eastfall and westspring:  
Clapper in the big bell mouth,  
Ring the bell — *ring!*

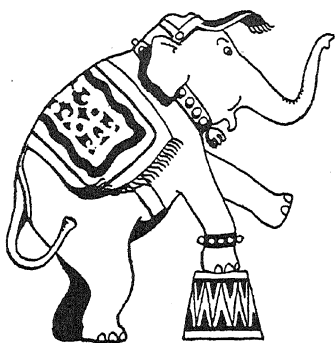


## From the Mailboat Passing By

In the long lake's mirror  
Everything is upside down.  
But nothing could be clearer:  
Mountain, bridge, and town;  
    Pine tree, birch, and oak,  
        Tall smoke,  
All topside upside down:  
    Even the fisherfolk,  
    Even a smile or frown.

# Tomorrows

Tomorrows never seem to stay,  
Tomorrow will be yesterday  
Before you know.  
Tomorrows have a sorry way  
Of turning into just today,  
And so . . . and so . . .



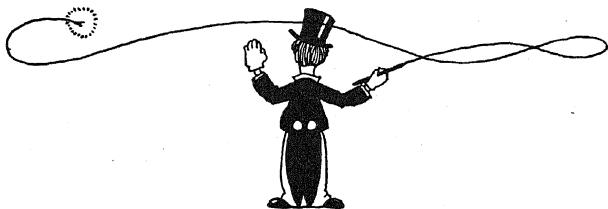
## In the Middle

I think about the elephant and flea,  
For somewhere in between them there is me.

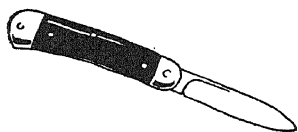
Perhaps the flea is unaware of this:  
Perhaps I'm not what elephants would miss.

I don't know how the flea puts in his day;  
I guess an elephant just likes to sway.

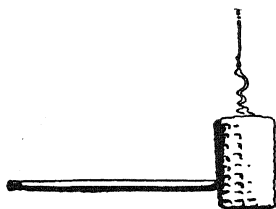
But there they are: one little and one large,  
And in between them only me in charge!



## Mr. Macklin's Jack o'Lantern



Mr. Macklin takes his knife  
And carves the yellow pumpkin face:  
Three holes bring eyes and nose to life,  
The mouth has thirteen teeth in place.



Then Mr. Macklin just for fun  
Transfers the corn-cob pipe from his  
Wry mouth to Jack's, and everyone  
Dies laughing! O what fun it is





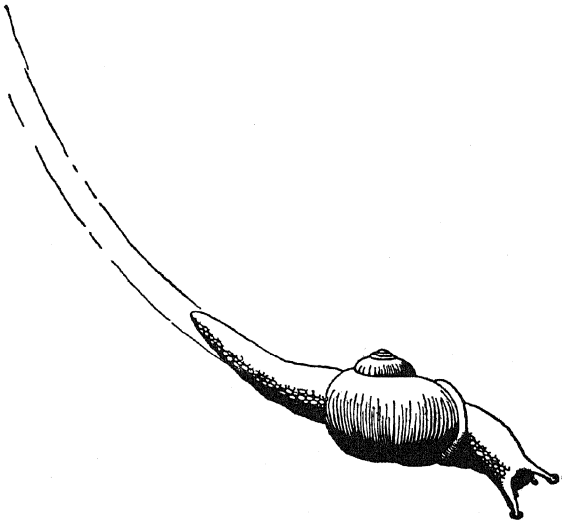
Till Mr. Macklin draws the shade  
And lights the candle in Jack's skull.  
Then all the inside dark is made  
As spooky and as horribleful



As Halloween, and creepy crawl  
The shadows on the tool-house floor,  
With Jack's face dancing on the wall.  
*O Mr. Macklin! Where's the door?*

# Snail

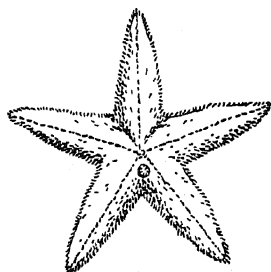
This sticky trail  
Was made by snail.  
Snail makes no track  
That he'll take back.  
However slow,  
His word is go.  
(Twixt me and you  
The word is goo.)



# The Starfish

When I see a starfish  
Upon the shining sand,  
I ask him how he liked the sea  
And if he likes the land.  
“Would you rather be a starfish  
Or an out-beyond-the-bar fish?”  
I whisper very softly,  
And he seems to understand.

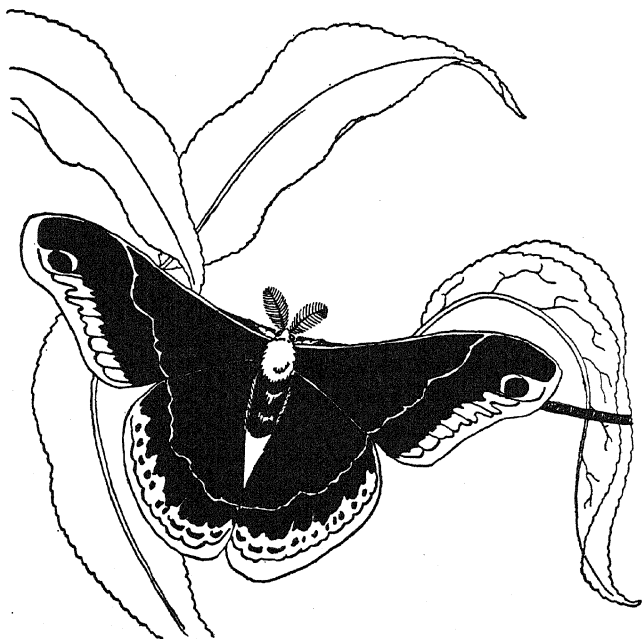
He never *says* directly,  
But I fancy all the same  
That he knows the answer quite as well  
As if it were his name:  
“An out-beyond-the-bar fish  
Is much happier than a starfish”;  
And when I look for him again  
He’s gone the way he came.

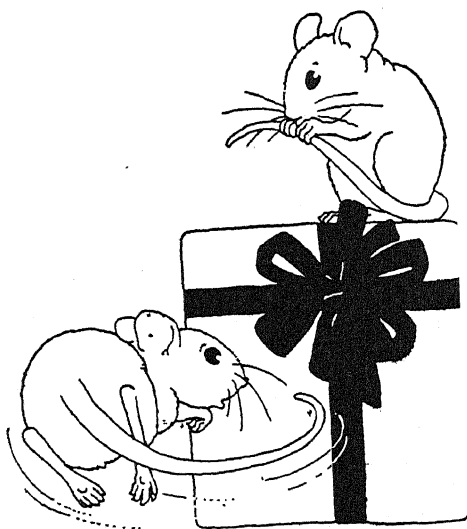




## Cocoon

The little caterpillar creeps  
Awhile before in silk it sleeps.  
It sleeps awhile before it flies,  
And flies awhile before it dies,  
And that's the end of three good tries.





## Waltzing Mice

Every night as I go to bed  
I think of the prayer I should have said;  
And even now as I bow my head:  
“Please, O Lord, may I have instead  
Some waltzing mice, a gun, and a sled?”

I don't suppose they're much of a price,  
But Uncle Ted (without advice)  
Gave me skates, and there isn't ice;  
And I could have been saying, “How terribly *nice*,  
A gun, a sled, and waltzing mice!”

Every night when play is done,  
I think them all over, one by one;  
“And quite the splendoriest, Lord, for fun  
Are waltzing mice, a sled, and a gun.”

## Smart Mr. Doppler

Smart Mr. Doppler  
Was a queer sort of bird,  
Not for things he did  
But for sounds he heard.  
Well, the sounds he heard  
Are the sounds we hear,  
But this Mr. Doppler  
Had the better ear,  
And this Mr. Doppler  
Had the brighter mind;  
So today one sound is the Doppler kind.

Hearing all the clamor  
Of an engine bell,  
He knew that it was coming  
If it seemed to swell:  
clang CLANG CLANG CLANG CLANG  
(it rang)  
CLANG CLANG CLANG CLANG *clang*.

And that was another very odd thing too:  
The pitch went down when the sound passed through:  
clang  
CLANG  
CLANG  
CLANG  
CLANG

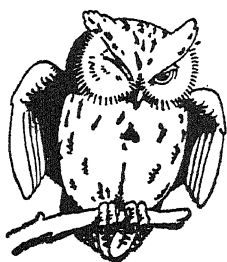


(past you)  
CLANG  
CLANG  
CLANG  
CLANG  
clang.

Smart Mr. Doppler  
Is long since gone:  
But you can hear him everywhere  
From dark to dawn.  
From dawn to dark  
You can hear him:  
HARK!

Riding on the train  
When another goes by,  
With the bell ding . . . *dong* . . . ding . . .  
higher, HIGHER, HIGH;  
With the ding-dong-dang of it, ..  
LOWER, LOWER, *low*. . . .

When you hear it so  
You will always know  
That smart Mr. Doppler  
Is still on the go!



## Owls Talking

I think that many owls say *Who-o*:  
At least the owls that I know do-o.  
But somewhere when some owls do not-t,  
Perhaps they cry *Which-h*, *Why-y*, or *What-t*.

Or when they itch-h  
They just say *Which-h*,  
Or close one eye-e  
And try *What-t* *Why-y*.

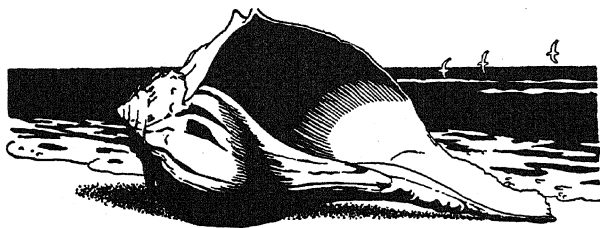
## Far Away

How far, today,  
Is far away?  
It's farther now than I can say,  
It's farther now than you can say,  
It's farther now than who can say,  
It's very *very* far away:  
You'd better better better play,  
You'd better stay and play today.  
Okay . . . okay . . . okay.

## The Shell

I took away the ocean once,  
Spiraled in a shell,  
And happily for months and months  
I heard it very well.

How is it then that I should hear  
What months and months before  
Had blown upon me sad and clear,  
Down by the grainy shore?



## Watching the Moon

September evenings such as these  
The moon hides early in the trees,  
And when we drive along the shore  
I think I miss the trees the more  
Because the moon is coming down  
Beyond the branches and will drown.

## Asleep and Awake

Nothing in the sky is high,  
Nothing in the sea is deep,  
Nothing on the street goes by  
When I'm asleep.

Nothing but the world is wide,  
Nothing but a storm can break,  
Nothing but a star can hide  
When I'm awake.





## The White Ships

Out from the beach the ships I see  
On cloudy sails move sleepily,  
And though the wind be fair and strong  
I watch them steal like ants along,  
Following free, or wheeling now  
To dip the sun a golden prow.

But when I ride upon the train  
And turn to find the ships again,  
I catch them far against the sky,  
With crowded canvas hurrying by,  
To all intent as fast as we  
Are thundering beside the sea.



## At Low Tide

A broken saucer of the sea  
Is lying on the sand,  
With seaweed like the leaves of tea,  
Brown as the boy's brown hand —

The small brown boy with pail and spade,  
The connoisseur of kelp,  
Considering what the tide has made  
And best how he can help.

## The Wind

Wind in the garden,  
Wind on the hill,  
Wind I-am-blowing,  
Never be still.

Wind I-am-blowing,  
I love you the best:  
Out of the morning,  
Into the west.

Out of the morning,  
Washed in the blue,  
Wind I-am-blowing,  
*Where* are you?



## Our Mr. Toad

Our Mr. Toad  
Has a nice abode  
Under the first front step.  
When it rains he's cool  
In a secret pool  
Where the water goes  
    drip  
    drop  
    drep.

Our Mr. Toad  
Will avoid the road:  
He's a private-cellar man.  
And it's not much fun  
In the broiling sun  
When you *have* a good  
    ten  
    tone  
    tan.

Our Mr. Toad  
Has a kind of code  
That tells him the coast is clear.  
Then away he'll hop  
With a stop, stop, stop  
When the dusk draws  
    nigh  
    no  
    near.

## Fat Father Robin

Fat father robin,  
A red rubber ball,  
Rolls across the lawn  
And bounces off the wall.

Rolls, bounces, rolls away,  
Hearing in the ground  
The worm talking tunnel  
And the mole saying mound.





August 28

A flock of swallows have gone flying south;  
The bluejay carries acorns in his mouth.  
I don't know where he carries them or why.  
I'm never sure I like the bluejay's cry,  
But still I like his blue shape in the sky.

# John



John comes in with a basket:  
John is a neighborly man.  
I have a question — I ask it:  
John, can I mix the bran  
And make the mash  
With a splash in the pan  
And feed the pig —  
Not the awfully big  
One — the little one. Can  
I, John?



John comes in with a basket:  
The basket is full of wood.  
I have a question — I ask it:  
John, if I'm awfully good,  
Could I help today  
With the hay? If I should,



I'd like to rake  
While the others make.  
I'd be good. Now could  
I, John?



John comes in with a basket:  
The basket is full of flowers.  
I have a question — I ask it:  
John, if it rains or showers  
How would it seem  
To your team of plowers  
To follow for worms  
With attracting squirms  
And fish for hours,  
Hey, John?

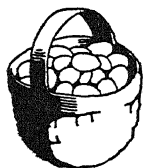


John comes in with a basket:  
The basket is full of fruit.  
I have a question — I ask it:  
John, would you like to shoot  
With the Indian bow

Of a Crow or a Ute —  
And arrows too,  
If we find a few?  
We could look. Would it suit  
You, John?

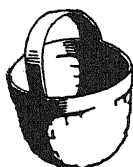


John comes in with a basket:  
The basket is full of peas.  
I have a question — I ask it:  
John, if it blows a breeze,  
Why couldn't we — well,  
If I shelled all these —  
Go fly my kite  
To a flyable height  
Where there aren't any trees,  
Eh, John?



John comes in with a basket:  
The basket that has no lid.

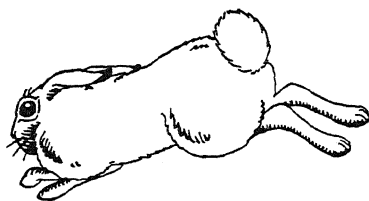
I have a question — I ask it:  
John, there's a hen that's hid  
Her nest in the loft  
Where I've often slid,  
But I've messed it some.  
Do you think she'll come  
To sit where she did  
Sit, John?



John comes in with a basket:  
A basket that's empty, too.  
I have a question — I ask it:  
John, did you know I knew?  
Tomorrow we'll pack  
And go back. It's true.  
Do you mind to stay  
With the snow and the sleigh?  
I'll miss you. Will you  
Me, John?

# Lost

I have a little turtle  
Name of Myrtle.  
I have an extra lizard  
Name of Wizard.  
I have two kinds of snake:  
Bill and Blake.  
I have a dandy hutch  
Without the rabbit.  
If you see any such,  
Will you please grab it?





## Durenda Fair

Shapely, sharp Durenda Fair  
Wore three roses in her hair:  
One for love and one for grace  
And one for any time and place.



# Crows


I like to walk  
And hear the black crows talk.

I like to lie  
And watch crows sail the sky.

I like the crow  
That wants the wind to blow:

I like the one  
That thinks the wind is fun.

I like to see  
Crows spilling from a tree,

And try to find  
The top crow left behind.

I like to hear  
Crows caw that spring is near.

I like the great  
Wild clamor of crow hate

Three farms away  
When owls are out by day.

I like the slow  
Tired homeward-flying crow;

I like the sight  
Of crows for my good night.





# Who Wants a Birthday?

Who wants a birthday?  
Somebody does.

"I *am*," says a birthday,  
But never "I *was*."

"Five, six," says a birthday:  
"You're seven!" "You're nine!"

"I'm yours," says a birthday,  
"And you, child, are mine."

"*How* old?" says a birthday.  
(You have to guess right.)

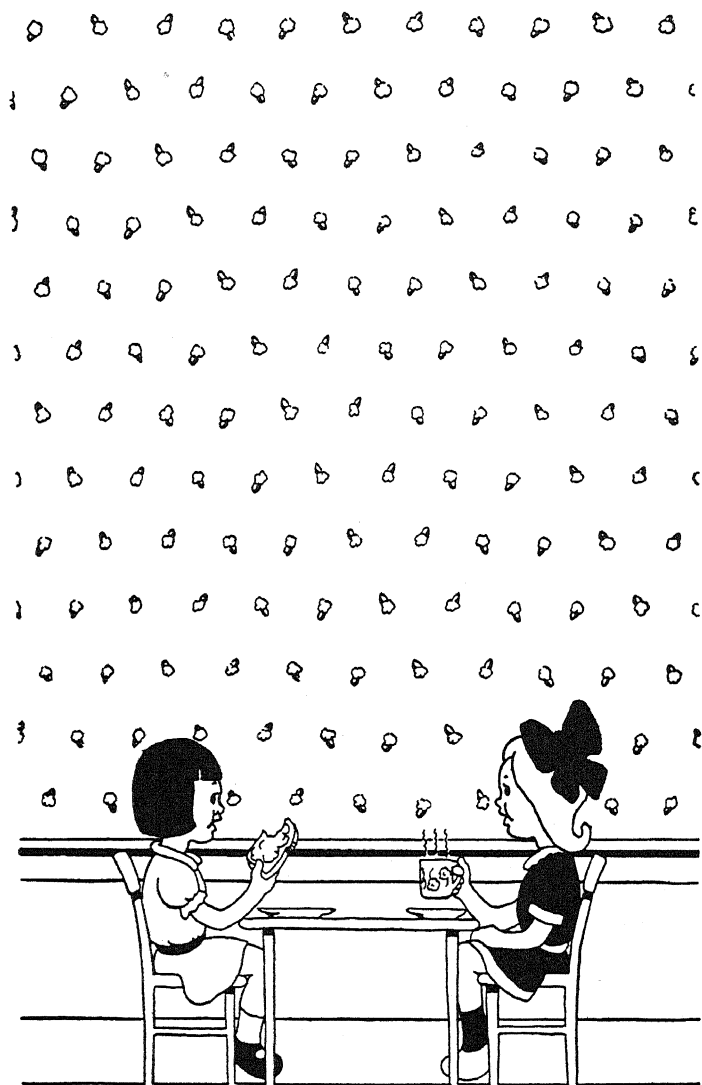
"You're *what*?" says a birthday.  
(You may be: you *might*.)

"A cake," says a birthday,  
"I'm sure there's a cake!"

"A wish," says a birthday.  
"What wish do you make?"

"I'm glad," says a birthday,  
"To see how you've grown."

"Hello!" says a birthday.  
("Hello!" says my own.)



# Isabel Jones & Curabel Lee

Isabel Jones & Curabel Lee  
Lived on butter and bread and tea,  
And as to that they would both agree:  
Isabel, Curabel, Jones & Lee.

Isabel said: While prunes have stones  
They aren't a promising food for Jones;  
Curabel said: Well, as for me,  
Tripe is a terrible thing for Lee.

There's not a dish of fowl or fish  
For which we wish, said I. & C.  
And that is why until we die  
We'll eat no pie, nor beg nor buy  
But butter and bread and a trace of tea.  
(Signed) *Isabel Jones & Curabel Lee.*

## Song Before Supper

Now everything is ready, child, and ready I'm for you,  
With supper on the table and a rice-and-radish stew.  
And I am even readier to find you ready too,  
But all I hear you answer is a  
Ding-Dang-Dongeroo.

I know you aren't a fireman, and you say you're not a cow.  
I think you aren't a cowboy, but I don't know why or how.  
And if you're not a lion in the zoo, what *are* you now?  
And *is* it Ding-Dang-Dongeroo or  
Ding-Dang-Dongerow?

You say a thousand other things that I don't understand:  
They sound like frogs in water jugs or wind across the sand.  
I don't know why you say them, but I wish you'd change  
your brand.

So Ding-Dang-Dongeroo to you!  
Go wash your other hand!

Perhaps you're just a bicycle, a bittern in the mire,  
The hook-and-ladder taking corners flying to a fire,  
Lost sheep, or buoys after dark. . . . But won't you *ever* tire  
Of Ding-Dang-Dongeroo, young man?  
I do. Sit up, now, *higher!*

*I have it! It's a kangaroo! How did I ever miss?  
A kangaroo in dungarees! But even so, no bliss  
For me to listen all day long to your small orifice  
Repeating Ding-Dang-Dongaroo.*

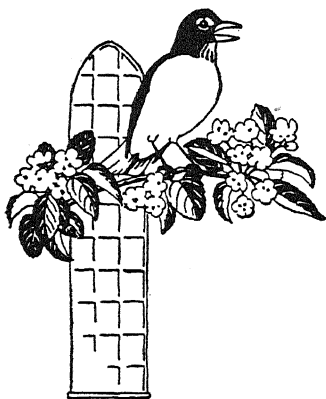
*Ding-Dang! Eat some of this!*

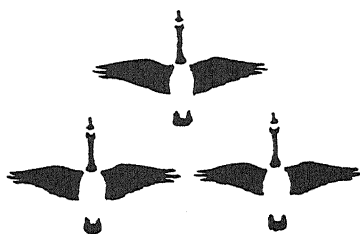


# Through the Window

The bells are ringing for church this morning,  
For church this morning the bells are rung;  
And up in the loft the choir is singing,  
The choir is singing, the song is sung.

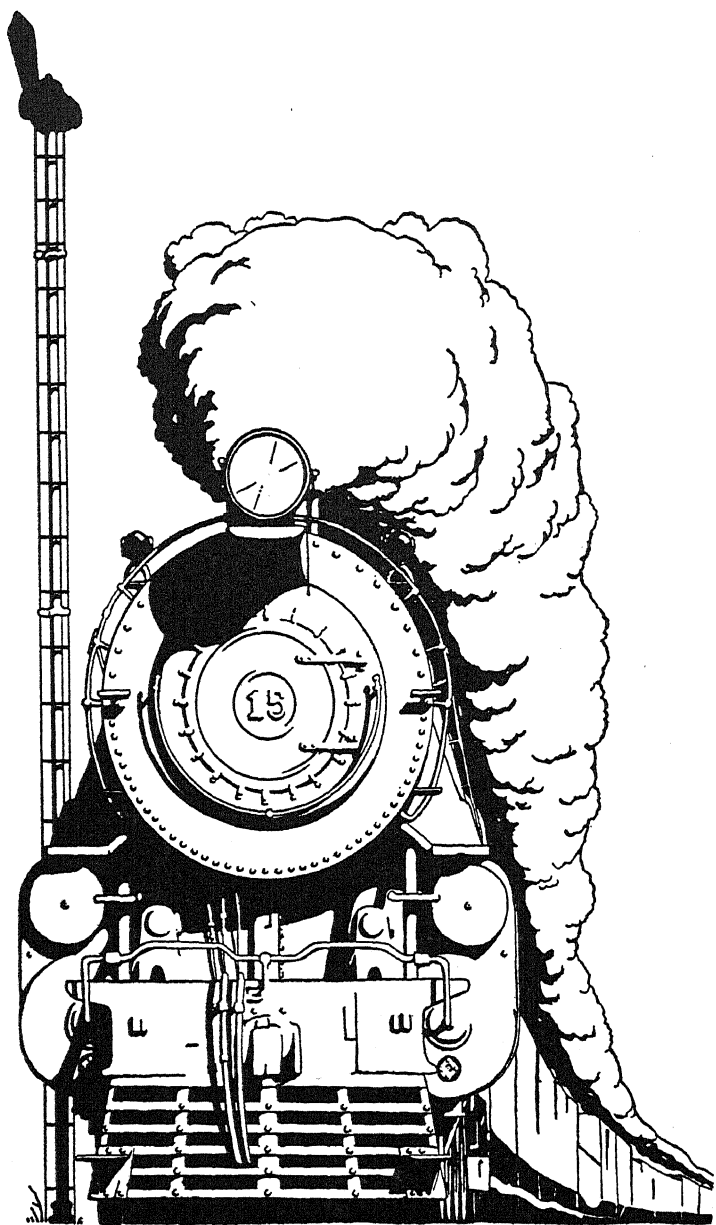
The bells are ringing for church this morning,  
A little boy in the seventh pew  
Is listening hard to a golden warning:  
A bird, perhaps, with a *Where are you?*





## V

V  
cry the geese  
fly V  
who me?  
rues a goose  
no use  
for me  
to fly a V  
I'm only one of three  
and three must all agree  
if three will make a V  
acute or obtuse  
with two in the caboose  
and one in the  
a-po-gee

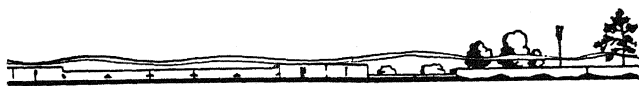




# Song of the Train

Clickety-clack,  
Wheels on the track,  
This is the way  
They begin the attack:  
Click-ety-clack,  
Click-ety-clack,  
Click-ety, *clack*-ety,  
Click-ety  
Clack.

Clickety-clack,  
Over the crack,  
Faster and faster  
The song of the track:  
Clickety-clack,  
Clickety-clack,  
Clickety, clackety,  
*Clackety*  
Clack.



Riding in front,  
Riding in back,  
*Everyone* hears  
The song of the track:  
Clickety-clack,  
Clickety-clack,  
Clickety, *clickety*,  
Clackety  
*Clack.*



# Trick or Treat

Halloween,  
Halloween,  
*Halloween!*

Latch the latch,  
Catch the catch,  
Scratch the match.

Witches ride,  
Jack will hide  
Lantern-eyed.

Better bake.  
Better make  
Candy, cake.

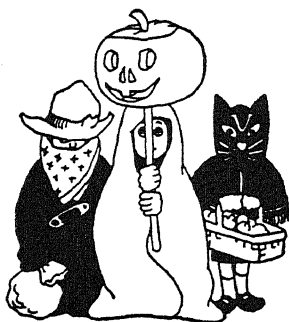
Mask or sheet:  
*Trick or treat!*  
Ghosts are fleet.

Soon or late  
Sure as fate  
Goes the gate.

Knocker, bell  
Cast the spell.  
Treat them well!

Silly sooth:  
Youth is youth,  
Tongue and tooth.

Treat them quick,  
Else the trick:  
*Take your pick!*



## Conversation

"Mother, may I stay up tonight?"

"No, dear."

"Oh dear! (She always says 'No, dear').  
But Father said I might."

"No, dear."

"He did, that is, if you thought it right."

"No, dear, it isn't right."

"Oh dear! Can I keep on the light?"

"No, dear. In spite

Of what your Father said,

You go to bed,

And in the morning you'll be bright

And glad instead

For one more day ahead."

"I might,

But not for one more night."

"No, dear — *no*, dear."

"At least I've been polite, I guess."

"Yes, dear, you've been polite —

Good night."

"Oh dear,

I'd rather stay down here —

I'm quite . . ."

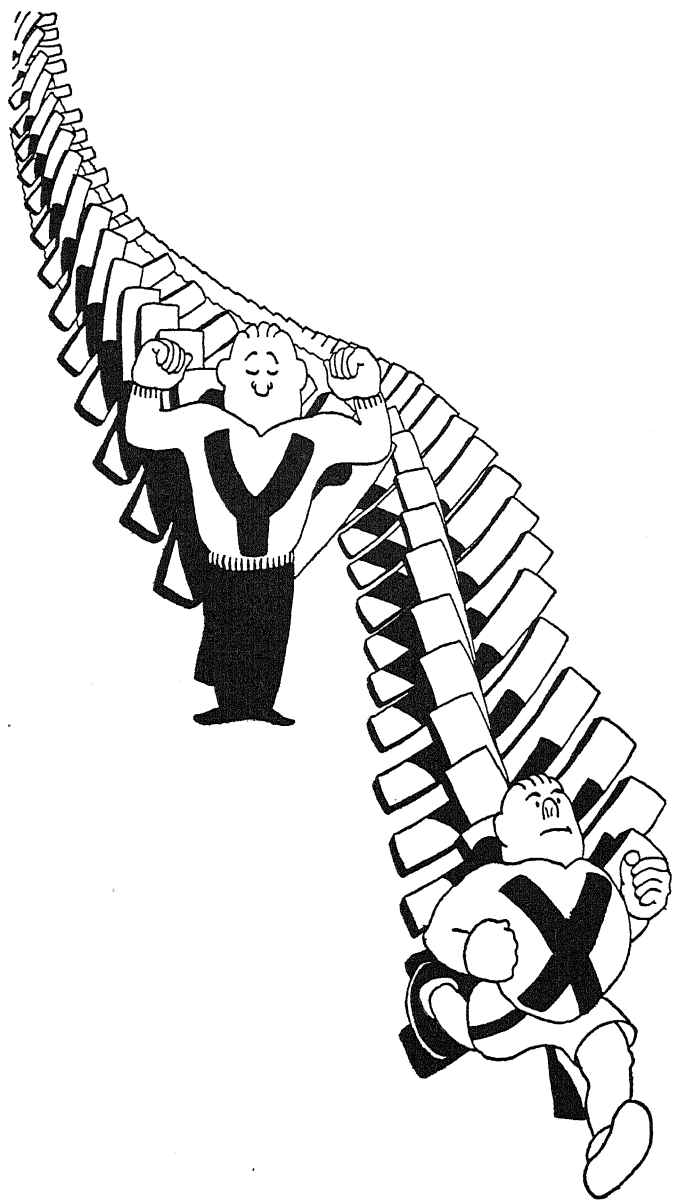
"No, dear. Now, out of sight."

("Well that was pretty near —")

"*Good* night."

("— all right.")

"Good *night!*"

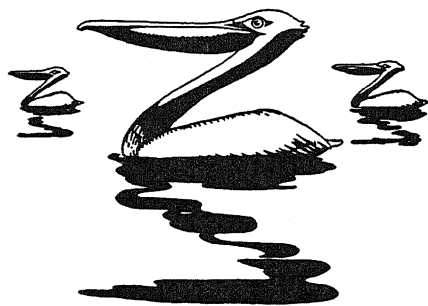


## X & Y

Y is a chesty letter,  
X is an active one.  
Y couldn't stand up better,  
X seems to walk or run.  
Y is for youth, and youthful  
X in his excellent way  
Is pleasant. And yet to be truthful,  
Child, there will come a day  
When, learn as you must, the sequel —  
For life has the will to vex —  
Nothing for trouble will equal  
Your Y and your XY and X.

# Z

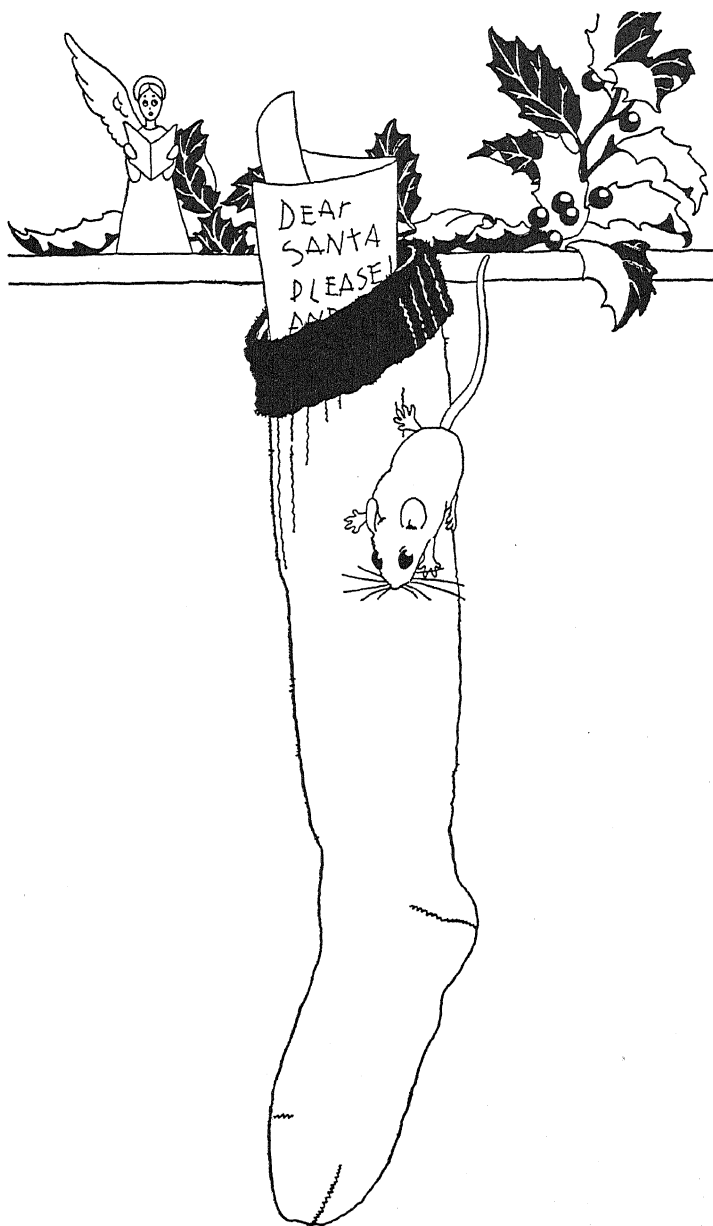
When all is zed and done,  
Z is the letter one.  
No other one for me  
So lovely as a Z.





# Song

Wind and wave and star and sea,  
And life is O! a song for me.  
Wave and wind and sea and star,  
Now I shall tell them what we are.  
Star and sea and wind and wave,  
I am a giant, strong and brave.  
Sea and star and wave and wind,  
You are the tiger I have skinned.



# Christmas Eve

I see some waits awaiting,  
I hear some singers sing.  
Bell-ringers all keep ringing,  
But what will Christmas bring?

The air is keen for carols;  
My ears are cold, and sting.  
*Let Peace abide!* It's hot inside,  
But what will Christmas bring?

I've found a stack of stockings,  
An angel with one wing.  
By candlelight I've said good night,  
But what will Christmas bring?

*Noël, Noël!* Forever  
That bell-like sound a-swing  
Is God and love. *I'm* thinking of:  
*But what will Christmas bring?*



# Fred

Speaking of Joe, I should have said  
Our flying squirrel's name is Fred.

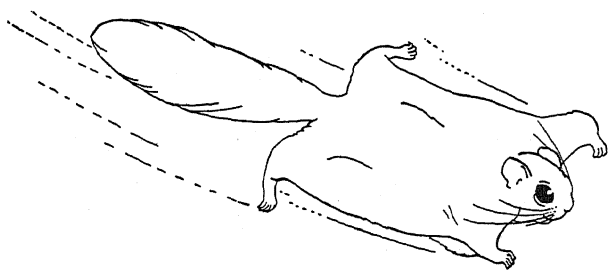
Fred is no flyer, but a glider.  
His skin is loose and soft as eider.

But Fred himself is no softy:  
He likes tough trees, and likes them lofty.

Fred is not around much at noon;  
But at night, and under a bright full moon,

He sails from tree to tree like a circus performer;  
And once last summer he sailed right into the dormer

Window of the empty house next door.  
But that's Fred all over. Need I say more?























## DAVID McCORD

David McCord's ancestors were Colonial Pennsylvanians. He was born in New York City. As a boy he lived on a ranch in the Rogue River valley of Oregon, learned the life of the wilderness, moved north and graduated from Lincoln High School in Portland. He received his A.B. and A.M. degrees from Harvard, where he is now director of the Harvard Fund.

FAR AND FEW is Mr. McCord's twentieth book. Ten earlier volumes of poetry include *The Crows* (1934) and *A Star By Day* (1950). His anthology, *What Cheer* (1945), was called by both Louis Untermeyer and F.P.A. "the best book of light verse ever made."

In 1950 he delivered eight Lowell Lectures on Edward Lear: A Study of Sense and Nonsense. He has given the Phi Beta Kappa Poems at Tufts, Harvard, William and Mary; and the Phi Beta Kappa address at Washington and Jefferson. He has long been a contributor to the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The Saturday Review*, *The New Yorker*, and other magazines. In 1951 his *Poet Always Next But One* received the William Rose Benét Award.

The inventor of symmetrics, Mr. McCord thinks that learning "The Owl and the Pussy-cat" by heart at five, and the Morse Code at seven (he holds a very early government wireless operator's license), and studying Latin at ten are at the beginning of his life-long interest in rhythm.

## HENRY B. KANE

Noted photographer and illustrator, particularly of wild life subjects, Henry Kane is also the author of several books, including *Tale of the White-faced Hornet*, *Tale of the Whitefoot Mouse*, *Tale of the Wild Goose*. His beautiful line drawings for *Cache Lake Country* by J. J. Rowlands were in some ways only a foretaste of what he would do with the many different subjects of David McCord's verse in FAR AND FEW.

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